

EPA REGION III

◇Office of Public Affairs

◇PM Headlines

Thursday, May 17, 2012

***** PM HOT LIST *****

EPA's Jackson Signs New Air Standards

WCHS RADIO 58 Federal EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson told members of a U.S. Senate subcommittee Wednesday she has now signed a policy setting new Mercury and Air Toxics Standards for coal and oil-fired power plants. Jackson was testifying about the agency's budget proposal to members of a subcommittee of the Senate's Appropriations Committee. In her opening statement, she said she signed the standards Wednesday morning just before the meeting. They were first announced last December. The rules will require power companies to install equipment to control emissions to cut back on mercury, arsenic, acid gas, nickel, selenium, and cyanide. Jackson says the standards were first discussed in connection with the 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act but only about 50 percent of companies that operate coal-fired power plants have made changes. The new standards will force everyone to do so. "Nearly half of the country's coal-fired plants continue to do nothing to limit the amounts of these poisons that they spew into the air. EPA's new action will ensure that companies all across the country follow the same rules," Jackson told the committee. Jackson also said the standards will improve the health of many residents. "These new standards will each year prevent up to 17-thousand premature deaths in America not to mention 120-thousand cases of aggravated asthma," Jackson said. "The health benefits will swamp the complaints caused by about 10 to 1."

EPA wants more money to probe fracking

UPI WASHINGTON, May 17 (UPI) -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said it was requesting a funding increase to investigate hydraulic fracturing technologies. The EPA said it made a budget request of \$8.3 billion for fiscal year 2013. About 10 percent of the budget would target science and technology funding. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson told a U.S. Senate appropriations committee that part of the \$807 million in funding for research includes hydraulic fracturing. Hydraulic fracturing uses water mixed with abrasives and chemicals to coax oil and natural gas out of rock formations deep underground. The method is controversial because of the perceived threats to the environment.

EPA's Jackson Says Fracking Water Study Won't Stop Drilling

AOL ENERGY Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson on Wednesday sought to tamp down concerns raised by Republican senators that the Obama administration will try to curtail shale gas and oil development through its studies of hydraulic fracturing. At a hearing before a Senate Appropriations Committee panel on EPA's \$8.3 billion 2013 budget request, Jackson said a request for \$8 million for additional hydraulic fracturing research was not intended to put new roadblocks in the way of domestic drilling. The additional

money would pay for EPA's portion of new fracking studies to be done with other federal agencies. The agency has also asked for more than \$4 million to continue work on the congressionally-mandated study of potential impacts to drinking water supplies. "I guess I'm a little concerned about the scope of the study that we're seeing come out," said Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, the top Republican on the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Subcommittee. Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., asked, "Does that study stop us from moving forward with hydraulic fracturing?" Jackson said the drinking water study would inform EPA of any unexpected threats to public health, but not to stop fracturing, which has led to a boom in gas development in Pennsylvania and West Virginia and oil drilling in the Plains states.

Peters official concerned about group's role in crafting shale law

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE A Peters councilman has sent a scathing letter to the head of the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors, calling out the organization for publishing a "deliberately misleading" bulletin about a legal challenge to the state's new Marcellus Shale law. The letter also says the organization has "failed miserably" in its duty to protect municipalities from having zoning, planning and other rights stripped. Councilman David Ball wrote to the executive director of the supervisors organization, David Sanko, citing the group's April bulletin, specifically an update about the status of Act 13, the state's new law governing Marcellus Shale drilling and impact fees. Peters, South Fayette and five other municipalities plus an environmental group and several individuals, including Mr. Ball, joined to file a legal challenge to Act 13 and successfully secured a 120-day injunction for the portion of the law that pre-empts local zoning laws, although the remainder of Act 13 went into effect April 14. Other municipalities in the lawsuit are:

Sterilizing That Blasted Ballast

NEW YORK TIMES In the dank bowels of the ship, a million microbes squirm and writhe. Their watery cradle — the ballast — plays a central role in balancing the weight of giant cargo ships that regularly shuttle back and forth between the world's oceans. Invisibly ferried from port to port, the hitchhiking larvae, phytoplankton and bacteria pose a costly threat. If flushed into the wrong environment, these aliens could very well take over ecosystems. "Invasions happen all the time," said Mario Tamburri, a marine ecologist at the University of Maryland's Center for Environmental Science and the director of the Maritime Environmental Resource Center, or MERC, in the **Chesapeake Bay**. "Some are benign, but some cause enormous damage." Dr. Tamburri and his colleagues spend much of their time aboard one of the newest research vessels in American waters, trying to find solutions to the ballast problem. ... Ballast-sterilizing techniques may need to be customized for different types of ships plying different routes. In the Chesapeake Bay, MERC researchers test the methods on water gradients of varying salinity, from fresh to brackish to very salty. Initial trials suggest that a broad suite of solutions may ultimately be adopted.

Youth project workers measure air pollution in Braddock

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE Braddock is home to one of the region's few remaining steel mills, U.S. Steel Corp.'s Edgar Thomson Works. And diesel traffic chugs up and down Braddock Avenue all day, bringing even more air pollution to the borough. But just how much air pollution? Teens from the Braddock Youth Project -- a community development, youth employment and work readiness program -- teamed up with the Group Against Smog and Pollution to figure it out. "Along Braddock Avenue, there's a higher level of ambient particular matter than anywhere else" in the study area, said Robert Grey, a youth project worker, Woodland Hills High School senior and Braddock resident. Heritage Community Initiatives, a Braddock nonprofit, received a grant from the **Environmental Protection Agency** to look at environmental issues in the community. GASP trained Robert, youth project program coordinator Jessica Schmid and others to use monitors to measure the concentration of PM 2.5 particles. These particles are smaller than 2.5 microns in diameter -- the invisible particles are the "most damaging" to a person's health, according to Jamin Bogi, education and outreach coordinator for GASP. The GASP-trained teens set up shop at the corner of Braddock Avenue and Library Street -- a busy intersection at the heart of the borough.

Blog: CDC lowers lead poisoning threshold

BALTIMORE-SUN The number of young children deemed at risk of lead poisoning in Maryland and nationwide expanded drastically Wednesday as a federal health agency declared it would effectively cut in half its threshold for diagnosing the environmental illness. Acknowledging mounting evidence that children can suffer lasting harm from ingesting even minute amounts of lead, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said it would reduce the level at which it recommends that doctors, families and health authorities act to lower a child's exposure to the toxic metal. Officials estimate the CDC's adoption of a new "reference level" for assessing low-level exposure to lead could add 200,000 children nationwide to 250,000 considered poisoned under the old threshold. In Maryland, the percentage increase is probably even greater. Under the new standard, 3,500 more children statewide would have been added to the 531 who tested positive for lead poisoning in 2010, the most recent year for which figures are available. But the federal agency's move comes even as its own funding for fighting lead poisoning has been slashed, leaving state and local governments with fewer resources to tackle what has now been recognized as a much bigger problem.

Governor Corbet Says Doctors' Concerns Over Act 13 May Be "Moot"

STATEIMPACT - Pennsylvania Governor Corbett says he's not sure how the rule governing a healthcare worker's access to trade secret information got into the state's new drilling law. He also says the controversial local zoning provisions of Act 13 re-establish a Pennsylvania law that existed before a Supreme Court ruling in the 1980's. WHYY's Radio Times host Marty Moss-Coane interviewed Corbett Tuesday night at an annual event sponsored by the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce and WHYY. The local zoning restrictions within Act 13 are being challenged in court by several municipalities. Corbett defended the provision. "What it re-established in the zoning law," said Corbett, "is pretty much what the law was before a Supreme Court decision in mid-1980's. There has to be some ability to have some predictability about letting people go down and get their gas and most importantly being able to let people transport their gas across municipalities." Corbett says with over 2500 municipalities in the state, it would be difficult for gas companies, and the communities themselves, to know what to expect. He said Act 13 also made Pennsylvania the state with the most stringent environmental laws when it comes to oil and gas drilling.

***** MORNING HOT LIST *****

Fracking's Methane Trail: A Detective Story

NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO There are a lot of cheerleaders for the nation's natural gas boom — in part because they believe it's a lot cleaner than dirty coal. It's pretty well-known that power plants that burn coal pump out far more greenhouse gases than power plants that run on natural gas. But there's a hitch: We don't really know how much air pollution is created when companies drill for natural gas. Well heads, storage tanks and pipelines all leak methane in sprawling gas fields. "We need to know a lot about methane itself, which is natural gas, if we're worried about climate change," says energy consultant Sue Tierney, "so that we don't automatically think that gas is so much cleaner than coal." Methane is a very potent greenhouse gas. It's very effective at trapping heat in the atmosphere. "Fifty years from now, are we really going to be wondering if we really screwed up because we went on this big gas boom? You really wouldn't want to be messing that up," Tierney says. She says that's why it's so important to study air pollution from natural gas production now. Tierney was on an Energy Department advisory panel that recommended that gas companies start measuring and reporting their air emissions.

When Polluted Water Is Safe to Drink: Inside the Dimock Fracking Fight

TRUTHOUT.ORG The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has spent the past four months testing water wells used by families in the rural community of Dimock, Pennsylvania, where residents and environmental activists have accused a gas drilling company of contaminating water supplies while drilling for natural gas in the area. As the debate over the gas drilling technique known as fracking rages across the country, the Dimock debacle has made national headlines; pitted neighbor against neighbor; and attracted the attention of activists, industry groups and even a movie star. The EPA study is nearly complete and both sides of the fracking debate are eager for answers, but for many onlookers, the truth about the drinking water in Dimock has remained as murky as the water that its outspoken residents pull from their wells. The EPA found pollutants in Dimock well water such as methane, arsenic, manganese, lead and barium. In some cases, the level of contamination exceeded federal health standards, but the agency has consistently stated the contamination levels do not pose a health concern or require immediate action from regulators. This apparent inconsistency has led to some serious media spin. As the EPA released test results throughout the study, mainstream media outlets and industry groups were quick to declare that the water in Dimock was safe to drink and EPA did not link any contaminants to fracking. Meanwhile, environmentalists and the anti-fracking group Water Defense questioned the agency's accuracy and pointed to the presence of methane and other pollutants in several wells as evidence that the water is not safe to use... Ronald Bishop, a fracking critic and biochemistry professor in the New York State University system, quickly disagreed with the EPA's latest analysis of the Dimock data. In a statement posted on the Water Defense web site, Bishop said one-third of the wells were contaminated with methane within ranges that could be ignited or detonated, bringing to mind the now infamous images of fracking victims lighting their tap water on fire. "These levels are of special concern where any hot water is used, since heating methane-contaminated water drives most of the methane into the air, which when inhaled can induce symptoms of oxygen deprivation in people or animals with cardiac, respiratory or central nervous system impairments," Bishop said.

EPA Administrator Defends Funding Request for More Study on Fracking

BNA DAILY ENVIRONMENT REPORT The head of the Environmental Protection Agency on May 16 defended the agency's funding request for additional research on the impact of hydraulic fracturing on the environment. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, speaking before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, said the Obama administration wants to assure the American public that the safety of hydraulic fracturing to extract natural gas and oil is based on "the very best science." The president's fiscal year 2013 budget includes \$14 million for EPA to fund research on hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, with \$8 million of that to fund a joint effort by EPA, the Energy Department, and the U.S. Geological Survey. Jackson said the overall budget request for the three agencies includes a total of \$45 million to fund research on fracturing other than the work covered by the joint research effort. EPA officials recently began meeting with DOE and USGS officials on the additional hydraulic fracturing research, Jackson said. Several Republican members of the subcommittee, including ranking member Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), questioned Jackson on why EPA is expanding the scope of a congressionally mandated study on the effect hydraulic fracturing has on drinking water. Murkowski asked why the agency would move forward with studies on other environmental effects before first finding a link between contaminated water and fracking. Jackson said the additional research is "not an expansion" of the two-year study of fracking and groundwater but rather part of a separate effort to investigate the environmental effects of the drilling technique.

Industry-funded study: EPA wrong about fracking contamination

WEST VIRGINIA STATE JOURNAL An industry-funded review says there are problems with the Environmental Protection Agency's December draft study suggesting that groundwater contamination in Pavillion,

Wyo., is "consistent with" hydraulic fracturing. "EPA's study design was not sufficient to gather the data, nor draw the conclusions it asserts," reads the beginning of the review's conclusions. "Review of U.S. EPA's December 2011 Draft Report: 'Investigation of Ground Water Contamination near Pavillion, Wyoming,'" was prepared by environmental and water resource consultants S.S. Papadopoulos & Associates Inc. of Bethesda, Md. The Independent Petroleum Association of America publicized the review on May 15. Although the document did not reveal a funding source, IPAA Vice President Jeff Eshelman acknowledged that his organization paid for the review. The EPA investigation in Pavillion, where natural gas has been produced since 1960 and where Encana Oil and Gas conducted hydraulic fracturing from 2004 to 2007, was long awaited as an important test of the gas industry's assertions that there has never been an incident in which groundwater was contaminated by hydraulic fracturing. The agency found preliminarily that there was groundwater contamination consistent with hydraulic fracturing when it released its draft report in December. Industry representatives disputed the agency's methods at the time. The current review of the EPA's draft finds, as industry said in December, that the agency proceeded without an adequate conceptual model of area hydrogeology and contaminant fate and transport.

Swimming advisories issued in Va. Beach, Dare Co.

NORFOLK VIRGINIAN PILOT VIRGINIA BEACH -- Swimming advisories have been issued for the Chesapeake Bay and sites in Dare County. Today, an advisory was issued for the Chesapeake Bay between Wake Forest Street and Rockbridge Road when bacteria levels in the water exceeded state water quality standards, according to a news release from the city of Virginia Beach. A swimming advisory was also posted for a site along the sound at Jockey's Ridge in North Carolina today. On May 9, the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources also issued an advisory at the end of Colington Drive in Kill Devil Hills. At both sites, the bacteria levels in the water exceeded the state and Environmental Protection Agency's recreational water quality standards, a news release said. The sites continue to be tested and the advisories will be taken down when the bacteria levels decrease below the standards. Signs are posted at all three sites. Officials test sites throughout the coastal region weekly, from April to October in North Carolina and from May to September in Virginia Beach

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

From Early Bird Radnor firm pumps \$25M to Marcellus driller Element Partners, Radnor, says it's joined Houston-based CSL Capital Management and North Sky Capital to buy three-year-old, Lafayette LA-based Environmental Drilling Solutions (EDS), which counts gas drillers in Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale and oil and gas firms in other states as customers. Element's David Lincoln closed the deal. Statement here. Element didn't announce a price, but on May 4 Lincoln filed this statement with the Securities and Exchange Commission noting Element committed \$24.8 million for "EDS Blocker LLC". Lincoln told me that doesn't reflect the sale price.

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

From Early Bird PNC funding of mountaintop mining hit A group of mostly elderly Quaker activists swelled to 75 on Wednesday as the final leg of their 200-mile, 17-day foot journey from Philadelphia approached its destination at PNC headquarters. Admittedly sore and achy, George Lakey -- the 74-year-old brainchild of the Earth Quaker Action Team's quest to confront PNC about its financing of mountaintop removal mining and one of two people to walk the entire trek -- was all smiles. "A very big part of this march was to gather people to join us and remove their money from PNC Bank," he said as trod along Fifth Avenue. "It was an enormous project for a very small group." Along highways, back roads, and through peaceful battles with PNC branches at every stop, the Philadelphia-based group's message to the bank remained: Agree to stop financing companies that conduct

mountaintop removal coal mining by May 31 or more than \$2 million will be removed from supporter accounts. When the journey finally ended, it was no surprise to EQAT that an invitation to James Rohr, chairman and CEO of PNC Financial Services Group, and William Demchak, president of PNC, to meet with the group and speak with residents affected by mountaintop removal wasn't accepted.

From Early Bird Pennsylvania Game Commission accepting bids for leasing local game lands to gas companies

The Pennsylvania Game Commission recently announced that it would be accepting bids from natural gas companies to lease State Game Lands 36, which is located across Monroe and Overton Townships and consists of over 3,177 acres, for the development of natural gas drilling. "We've found that state game lands can actually benefit two different ways from natural gas development," Press Secretary Jerry Feaser said. "We've discovered that well pad and pipeline construction can actually benefit wildlife in the long run. The initial excavation, construction and drilling processes are temporary habitat displacements. When the development enters the production stage, we've actually witnessed and photographed habitat improvements because well pads in production are meadow-like areas and pipelines provide a linear food supply. "The other benefit is for the game commission, itself, in the form of increased revenue," Feaser said. "Through lease payment and eventual royalty revenue, we'll be able to provide more funding to the game lands, hire more personnel and acquire more lands." However, according to the bid tract notice posted on the game commission's website for the public, State Game Lands 36 has portions of land that are zoned as "General Pre-approved Well Pad Locations." "Generally speaking, we avoid sensitive areas when it comes to the natural gas development on state game lands," Feaser said. "We try to avoid aspects of unique habitats like wetlands and steep slopes. We take proactive steps to avoid development on sensitive habitat locations and minimize environmental factors. We are always looking at all the factors." Those factors, according to the Marcellus Shale Drilling statement provided by Feaser, range from legal aspects like past leasing and if the Game Commission owns the oil and gas rights of state game lands or if there are changes in regulations to environmental impacts like water resources needed for hydraulic fracturing, pollution concerns and minimizing surface impacts. "In many instances, the Game Commission owns only the surface rights, and a separate party owns the oil and gas rights under State Game Lands," according to the statement provided by Feaser, "Under state law, the mineral estate is dominant over the surface estate, meaning that the mineral owner has the right to use the surface in a 'reasonable manner' to access their mineral reserve. Simply put, the Game Commission can't just say 'no' to those seeking to tap into the gas reserve that they own.

From Early Bird Pipeline, Allegheny Front win Golden Quill Awards Pipeline won the Golden Quill Award for Best Website on Monday night at the annual ceremony given by the Press Club of Western Pennsylvania. The Golden Quills competition recognizes professional excellence in written, photographic, broadcast and online journalism in Western Pennsylvania. It was just one of several awards given for coverage of the Marcellus Shale, with the Allegheny Front, a Pipeline News Partner, taking home five awards, including a Best of Show prize for Jenelle Pifer's "How It All Began: The Geology of the Marcellus Shale."

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day, bringing even more air pollution to the borough. But just how much air pollution? Teens from the Braddock Youth Project -- a community development, youth employment and work readiness program -- teamed up with the Group Against Smog and Pollution to figure it out. "Along Braddock Avenue, there's a higher level of ambient particular matter than anywhere else" in the study area, said Robert Grey, a youth project worker, Woodland Hills High School senior and Braddock resident. Heritage Community Initiatives, a Braddock nonprofit, received a grant from the **Environmental Protection Agency** to look at environmental issues in the community. GASP trained Robert, youth project program coordinator Jessica Schmid and others to use monitors to measure the concentration of PM 2.5 particles. These particles are smaller than 2.5 microns in diameter -- the invisible particles are the "most damaging" to a person's health, according to Jamin Bogi, education and outreach coordinator for GASP. The GASP-trained teens set up shop at the corner of Braddock Avenue and Library Street -- a busy intersection at the heart of the borough.

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE REVIEW

From Early Bird Sewickley Township OKs oil, gas deal Sewickley Township has entered into a five-year lease with Chevron Corp. for rights to oil and natural gas under the township's park and pool. Supervisors approved the agreement with the energy company at their meeting Wednesday for the 72-acre property where Crabapple Park and Pool are located in Herminie. The agreement does not allow drilling on the land, but supervisors said the company is planning a well about a quarter-mile away that could be installed horizontally. "If they do that, there is a real possibility they can go under the Crabapple property as well," said Supervisor Wanda Layman. The township was paid \$1,500 per acre, or \$108,000, for entering the agreement and will receive 15 percent in royalties if the well draws resources from the area, Layman said. "It's an opportunity," she said. "If we did not lease it to them, we would not have the opportunity if they did drill. I think it's a win-win because it's a no-drill lease. It won't disturb the property, it will go underground." Supervisors are also considering a similar lease for another 22-acre piece of township property near Herminie. In other business, a 10-ton weight limit may be imposed on West Newton Road between Clay Pike and Lowber Road after an ordinance is advertised and approved. Supervisor Joe Kerber said the restriction is meant to curb truck traffic if PennDOT imposes a similar restriction on Madison Road, which is a state road that connects the borough to Herminie. "If they do that we're afraid it will divert all heavy truck traffic onto West Newton street," he said. With repeated trips, tractor-trailers that weigh up to 40 tons and tri-axle trucks that weigh about 36 tons can damage roads quickly, Kerber said.

HARRISBURGH PATRIOT NEWS

From Early Bird Nuclear power regulators call for fewer immediate evacuations in an accident The cooling towers of the Three Mile Island nuclear facility and accompanying steam plume are an iconic feature of the Harrisburg area. Central Pennsylvania residents generally assume that if something goes wrong, as it did in 1979, local emergency crews are prepared. They are required to train regularly for the worst. Or at least they were. The Associated Press reported Wednesday that the nation's nuclear power regulators quietly overhauled community emergency planning for nuclear accidents for the first time in more than three decades, requiring fewer exercises for major accidents and recommending that fewer people be evacuated right away. The revamp is the first since the program began as a result of the Three Mile Island accident, the worst commercial nuclear accident in U.S. history. The revisions also eliminate a requirement that local responders always practice for a release of radiation.

ERIE TIMES-NEWS

From Early Bird Titusville gravel company fined over waste tires TITUSVILLE -- The state Department of Environmental Protection has fined owners of a Titusville gravel company for improper handling and disposal of waste tires. Herbert and Marion Hasbrouck, of Oil Creek Township, have been fined \$33,065 for burning waste tires at Hasbrouck Sand & Gravel Inc., a DEP spokesman said. State inspectors found a large pile of incinerated tires that had been reduced to ash on the property in January 2011. Waste tires were scattered nearby. Tires and ash have since been removed.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Pa.)

From Early Bird Lake Erie algae a top focus for US-Canadian panel TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. - A panel that advises the U.S. and Canadian governments about the Great Lakes will make Lake Erie's excessive phosphorus levels and algae blooms a priority for study over the next three years. The International Joint Commission said this week that it's assembled teams of experts to examine the worsening algae situation and recommend practices by farms, cities and industries that could reduce nutrient runoff into the lake. Huge mats of blue-green algae have clogged parts of Lake Erie's surface in recent years. Some is toxic to fish and other animals. It also litters beaches with rotting vegetation that chases away tourists. Other commission teams will assess progress toward fixing long-term environmental problems such as toxic pollution across the Great Lakes region and ways to improve access to scientific data.

STATEIMPACT - Pennsylvania

Governor Corbett Says Doctors' Concerns Over Act 13 May Be "Moot" Governor Corbett says he's not sure how the rule governing a healthcare worker's access to trade secret information got into the state's new drilling law. He also says the controversial local zoning provisions of Act 13 re-establish a Pennsylvania law that existed before a Supreme Court ruling in the 1980's. WHYY's Radio Times host Marty Moss-Coane interviewed Corbett Tuesday night at an annual event sponsored by the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce and WHYY. The local zoning restrictions within Act 13 are being challenged in court by several municipalities. Corbett defended the provision. "What it re-established in the zoning law," said Corbett, "is pretty much what the law was before a Supreme Court decision in mid-1980's. There has to be some ability to have some predictability about letting people go down and get their gas and most importantly being able to let people transport their gas across municipalities." Corbett says with over 2500 municipalities in the state, it would be difficult for gas companies, and the communities themselves, to know what to expect. He said Act 13 also made Pennsylvania the state with the most stringent environmental laws when it comes to oil and gas drilling.

CBS-Pittsburgh

Students Spread Environmental Awareness With an important election coming up this year, there are many topics buzzing around that are essential to understand before heading to the voting booth in November. This year especially, the environment and its future are a large concern for Americans. Not only are adults taking steps to save the environment, but young students are being proactive as well. For the second year, fifty schools in seven counties in the Pittsburgh area took part in a contest called "Let's Clear the Air" to celebrate Earth Day. The Southwest Pennsylvania Air Quality Partnership (SPAQP) paired with the Pennsylvania Resources Council (PRC) to create the contest for students in elementary school through high school. The students were invited to design a poster that raises awareness and educates viewers of going green by using clean air and alternative transportation.

THE TRENTON STAR-LEDGER

Smell from fire at Pa. chemical plant envelops Mercer area

Residents complained of nausea, schools closed and police warned people to stay inside after a strong chemical odor swept over the region yesterday, the result of an early morning Bristol, Pa., Dow Chemical plant fire caused by a lightning strike, officials said. Despite the pungency of the fumes, plant officials and experts said very little chemical material was released into the atmosphere and no serious health problems were likely. Officials said the three-alarm blaze, which broke out at 3:35 a.m. yesterday, consumed substances used in paint manufacturing and was brought under control by 7:30 a.m., though fumes continued to waft over the Trenton region late last night.

POCONO RECORD

Salt seepage pollutes wells at Birchwood Lakes

in Delaware County Residents of Birchwood Lakes in Delaware Township were told last week of a water contamination problem the community association board has known about since 2010, documents reveal. Road salt, once stored in a shed built in 1964, has seeped into groundwater and contaminated the wells of at least seven homes in the 871-home development. Though the contamination so far is isolated to those homes, the cost of any remedies

could be borne by all of the community's residents. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection was contacted in late 2009 by a homeowner who complained about a salty taste in his tap water, DEP spokeswoman Colleen Connolly said. The DEP started by testing three or four homes in 2010 and found too much sodium and chloride. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sets guidelines for the acceptable level of some contaminants.

PR NEWswire

Eureka Resources To Construct Marcellus Shale Wastewater Treatment Facility In Bradford County, Pennsylvania
WILLIAMSPORT, Pa., May 17, 2012 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- Eureka Resources, LLC, announced today that it will construct a world-class centralized wastewater treatment facility in Standing Stone Township, Bradford County, Pa., to treat wastewater generated during development of oil and gas wells in the Marcellus and Utica Shale. Plans for the facility include installation of Eureka's industry-leading treatment process that allows for recycling of Marcellus and Utica shale water for use at future well sites as well as a concentrated brine crystallizer to allow for beneficial reuse of valuable byproducts that can be extracted from the water. "Bradford County saw more drilling activity than any other Pennsylvania county last year," said Eureka's Chief Executive Officer Dan Ertel. "This facility will provide gas producers in this area with a treatment option that is closer to home and helps reduce the number of trucks needed for off-site disposal and their associated costs, noise and pollution."

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WASHINGTON POST

From Early Bird Blog: What the oil industry wants — in charts In many ways, life has never been better for the U.S. oil and gas industries. Production is up, thanks to new fracking technology. Profits are high. There's little chance Congress will cap carbon emissions anytime soon. What more could they ask for? Quite a bit, it turns out. On Tuesday, the American Petroleum Institute released a report full of recommendations to the Republican and Democratic committees that are crafting their party platforms this summer. Basically, this is Big Oil's wish list. It includes everything from opening up more federal lands for drilling to avoiding strict new federal rules on natural-gas fracking. And API has also included a slew of charts that help give a better sense for what's driving the oil and gas industry.

WTOP RADIO

From Early Bird Ceremony to designate 4 connecting river trails ANNAPOLIS, Md. - Four connecting river trails will be designated as historic components of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail at a ceremony. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar will join Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley and National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis at a ceremony Wednesday at Sandy Point State Park in Annapolis. State, local and tribal leaders will also participate in the ceremony. The designation is part of President Barack Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative. Four rivers in five states will be recognized for their significance to 17th century American Indian cultures and trade routes. The rivers are the Susquehanna, Chester, Upper Nanticoke and Upper James. The Captain John Smith National Historic Trail allows visitors to re-live John Smith's exploration of the Chesapeake Bay from 1607 to 1609.

DELAWARE

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL

From Early Bird Volunteers report horseshoe crab population increase REHOBOTH BEACH -- Volunteers with the Center for the Inland Bays have started collecting data earlier this year for the horseshoe crab survey, and

they're seeing a population increase. Each year, horseshoe crabs come ashore by the thousands in May and June to spawn. In 2008, the CIB partnered with Doug Miller at the University of Delaware's School of Earth, Ocean and the Environment in Lewes to answer questions about horseshoe crab spawning in the Inland Bays. In the first four years of the study, data has shown that the Inland Bays are host to a significant spawning population, which is comparable to those found in Delaware Bay surveys. This month, volunteers have met at six beaches -- Tower Road in Dewey Beach, James Farm in Ocean View, Bay Colony and Ellis Point in Dagsboro, Coastal Kayak LAB in Fenwick Island and the Peninsula development along Route 26 -- to collect data.

Offshore wind 'backbone' still a plus for Delaware

Delaware no longer has an offshore wind farm in active development, but a related project involving the state advanced this week. The U.S. Department of the Interior on Monday declared no competitive interest in ocean tracts being sought by the Atlantic Wind Connection. That allows the proposed underwater electric transmission line, which would connect wind farms off the Atlantic coast, to move directly to an environmental review.

State energy-efficiency programs shared with private foundation. One of the two co-chairmen of Delaware's energy-efficiency agency sought federal funding last year to replicate the group's work through a private foundation he created. John Byrne, who said last week he would resign from the Sustainable Energy Utility on June 1, said the SEU program concepts were his and he was free to do with them as he pleased, without prior approval by the SEU board. He did not alert the board to his plans. Critics say his foundation and those it hires stand to benefit from SEU programs and expertise created with state resources, and Byrne.

DELAWARE CAPE GAZETTE

From Early Bird Plan to address regional, multi-jurisdictional growth Lewes — Some local residents say the Cape Region will be more attractive and economically stable if a regional plan for growth is developed. From 6 to 8 p.m., Thursday, May 17, at the Virden Center in Lewes, the group will present the Cape Henlopen Regional Plan to the public with the hope of showing how such a plan could benefit the region. A second workshop will be held from 6 to 8 p.m., Monday, June 7 at the Rehoboth Beach Convention Center. “The whole idea is to demonstrate that regional planning in Sussex County has a lot of benefits to it,” said Jim Falk of Delaware Sea Grant program at the University of Delaware. If municipalities and the county worked together on a larger plan, Falk said, there could more opportunities for smarter growth, economic development and enhanced transportation systems. While each municipality produces a comprehensive development plan, no single plan has addressed a regional, multijurisdictional approach to growth, economic development and protection of natural and agricultural resources. Falk said he's recently worked with officials in Georgetown and Milford to develop comprehensive plans that look beyond the borders of their respective towns. Ed Lewandowski, coastal communities development specialist with the Delaware Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service, said the meeting will be interactive. “It's really about opening up a community conversation,” he said. “In many respects in the past, there's been a shroud or curtain around planning. In this case, we're pulling back the shroud to see some of the ramifications with the decisions being made.”

From Early Bird Shipbuilder's Village water tower damaged Milton — The concrete foundation of the water tower behind Shipbuilder's Village in Milton is damaged, but Mayor Cliff Newlands says there's no need to worry. As the 75,000-gallon tower was refilled following recent routine maintenance, surface cracks in the foundation began to grow larger. A public works employee noticed the damage and reported it to town hall. “He could actually put his fingers in the cracks - they were that wide,” Newlands said. “An area started chipping off. You could literally walk around parts of this thing and hit it and knock a piece off.” The damage is evident both inside and outside the tower. Councilman John Booros asked whether the damage was caused by the rare earthquake the area received last August, but Newlands said it's an issue that dates back two years. “This area was cracked two years ago. The cracks were filled in,” he said. “They were thought to be surface cracks.”

From Early Bird Home Energy Performance Effects Home Values The Appraisal Institute's (AI) new resource guide will effect home owners substantially in years to come. The association of professional real estate

appraisers is providing the component that has been missing in the shift to more energy efficient housing. The purpose of the resource guide is, "...providing real estate appraisers with necessary information to thoroughly analyze the effects of energy performance on property value..."

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Delaware)

Del. inland bay dredging not likely this year, boaters complain of shallow areas at low tide MILLSBORO, Del.

— A Delaware official says there isn't any money in the budget for dredging of smaller inland bay waterways.

David Small, the deputy secretary of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, says that because of attrition of staff and equipment, the state's ability to perform the work has also decreased. David Small, the deputy secretary of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, says that because of attrition of staff and equipment, the state's ability to perform the work has also decreased.

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON GAZETTE

From Early Bird Blog: W.Va. taxpayers fund anti-Obama coal campaign Folks in West Virginia may have heard about a series of upcoming events aimed at attacking President Obama and his Environmental Protection Agency's efforts to reduce the coal industry's impacts on the environment, public health and the global climate system. A group called "The Coal Forum" is sponsoring the events, which include meetings next week in Charleston, Wheeling and Beckley. Listed speakers include Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito, Congressman Nick Joe Rahall, Congressman David McKinley and UMWA President Cecil Roberts. Next week's meetings are described on the Coal Forum's website as events:

From Early Bird Blog: Another blast from the past: Dave Callaghan says Manchin, coal hijacked W.Va. Democratic party When last we heard from former West Virginia environmental regulator David C. Callaghan, he had written a pretty hard-hitting op-ed piece critical of mountaintop removal and the state political leadership that supports that practice. This morning, Callaghan has another must-read commentary in the Gazette, this one focused on the presidential election and the effort by the coal industry and its political friends to churn up concern about the Obama administration's supposed "war on coal." Callaghan focuses his criticism on Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin, saying:

WEST VIRGINIA STATE JOURNAL

From Early Bird Industry-funded study: EPA wrong about fracking contamination An industry-funded review says there are problems with the Environmental Protection Agency's December draft study suggesting that groundwater contamination in Pavillion, Wyo., is "consistent with" hydraulic fracturing. "EPA's study design was not sufficient to gather the data, nor draw the conclusions it asserts," reads the beginning of the review's conclusions. "Review of U.S. EPA's December 2011 Draft Report: 'Investigation of Ground Water Contamination near Pavillion, Wyoming,'" was prepared by environmental and water resource consultants S.S. Papadopoulos & Associates Inc. of Bethesda, Md. The Independent Petroleum Association of America publicized the review on May 15. Although the document did not reveal a funding source, IPAA Vice President Jeff Eshelman acknowledged that his organization paid for the review. The EPA investigation in Pavillion, where natural gas has been produced since 1960 and where Encana Oil and Gas conducted hydraulic fracturing from 2004 to 2007, was long awaited as an important test of the gas industry's assertions that there has never been an incident in which groundwater was contaminated by hydraulic fracturing. The agency found preliminarily that there was

groundwater contamination consistent with hydraulic fracturing when it released its draft report in December. Industry representatives disputed the agency's methods at the time. The current review of the EPA's draft finds, as industry said in December, that the agency proceeded without an adequate conceptual model of area hydrogeology and contaminant fate and transport.

PARKERSBURG NEWS AND SENTINEL

From Early Bird City to celebrate Bike to Work Day Friday PARKERSBURG - In an effort to promote health and wellness, as well as showcase the city's growing network of bike trails, the Parkersburg Bicycle Advisory Board encourages Parkersburg residents and downtown commuters to participate in Bike to Work...

WEST VIRGINIA STATE PUBLIC BROADCASTING

From Early Bird DEP solicits public comments on new gas facility operating permit The Division of Air Quality within the WV Department of Environmental Protection is soliciting comments from the public concerning a newly proposed operating permit. The permit pertains to any future Natural Gas Compressor Facilities designed to gather, dehydrate, transmit, and process or compress natural gas. Facilities will include such equipment as Indirect Heat Exchangers, Engines, Turbines, Storage Vessels, and Dehydration Units. All comments must be received by June 14. Copies of the Division of Air Quality Fact Sheet and Draft/Proposed Permit may be downloaded from the [DAQ's web site](#).

ASSOCIATED PRESS (W. Va.)

From Early Bird W.Va. cuts ribbon on new outdoor classroom in June SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va. -- A special kind of outdoor classroom opening soon in West Virginia is intended to be a national model for nature-based learning. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will celebrate the opening of the Nature Explore Classroom and Children's Tree House Learning Center in Shepherdstown on June 16. Both are at the National Conservation Training Center. It was selected for the project along with the Creston National Fish Hatchery in Montana. The outdoor classrooms are designed to let children climb, crawl, think and create using their five senses in a natural setting. The project also created jobs for young people. Students from the Harpers Ferry Job Corps installed materials, built walkways and created unique features for the children.

WEST VIRGINIA METRO NEWS

Analyst Says New EPA Rules Will Not Impact Company Credit

A credit analyst with Standard and Poor's says he and others believe utility companies that depend on coal for fuel will be able to stay in good financial shape even when new emission rules from the federal Environmental Protection Agency are fully implemented. Gabe Grosberg says those companies will do that by making you pay for the changes to limit the pollution put into the atmosphere. "Obviously, costs will go up as companies are required to spend on environmental capital expenditures," Grosberg said on Thursday's MetroNews Talkline. "But, despite the increase in costs, we ultimately expect that the utilities will be able to recover their costs and, therefore, the credit quality for these electric utilities will not be impacted." By many accounts, those costs will be passed directly to customers. Utility executives have indicated the EPA rules could raise bills by between 10% and 25% for those who get their electricity from coal. Officials with Standard & Poor's says companies, though, could take credit hits if rates are raised too quickly.

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE SUN

From Early Bird Blog: Chesapeake Bay historic trail expanding The 3,000-mile water and land trail network

created to relive the Chesapeake Bay's 17th century exploration by English colonists is about to grow still larger. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis are slated to visit Sandy Point State Park in Annapolis this afternoon to celebrate the addition of four new river trails to the existing Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. The federal officials are to be joined by Gov. Martin O'Malley, local officials, Native American tribal leaders and conservation group representatives.

From Early Bird Bacteria that caused flesh-eating infection more common than believed The story of a 24-year-old Georgia graduate student fighting a flesh-eating disease has prompted a microbiologist with the Veterans Affairs Maryland Health Care System to speak out about the infection. Aimee Copeland lost most of her left leg after the flesh-eating bacteria necrotizing fasciitis is believed to have entered a cut on her leg, according to the Associated Press, which reports she may also have to have her fingers amputated. The waterborne bacteria *Aeromonas hydrophila* is believed to have caused the infection. Microbiologist Amy J. Horneman, director of microbiology/molecular diagnostics at the Maryland VA who holds a doctorate in marine and estuarine environmental sciences, said the bacteria is more common than believed. She is not involved in Copeland's case but talks about the infection.

From Early Bird Solar power growing in Mid-Atlantic Solar power is gaining a foothold in the Mid-Atlantic region. As of this month, the amount of photovoltaic electric generating capacity installed surpassed 1 gigawatt, according to PJM Interconnection, which oversees the electricity transmission grid stretching from Delaware to northern Illinois and western Kentucky. That's enough - when the sun is shining - to power 800,000 to 1 million homes.

From Early Bird Most Marylanders support bringing elk back, survey finds But hunter-backed poll also finds strong opposition among some western Maryland landowners. The hunter-backed effort to bring wild elk back to western Maryland is gaining some steam, though fierce resistance remains in key quarters..

Blog: CDC lowers lead poisoning threshold

The number of young children deemed at risk of lead poisoning in Maryland and nationwide expanded drastically Wednesday as a federal health agency declared it would effectively cut in half its threshold for diagnosing the environmental illness. Acknowledging mounting evidence that children can suffer lasting harm from ingesting even minute amounts of lead, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said it would reduce the level at which it recommends that doctors, families and health authorities act to lower a child's exposure to the toxic metal. Officials estimate the CDC's adoption of a new "reference level" for assessing low-level exposure to lead could add 200,000 children nationwide to 250,000 considered poisoned under the old threshold. In Maryland, the percentage increase is probably even greater. Under the new standard, 3,500 more children statewide would have been added to the 531 who tested positive for lead poisoning in 2010, the most recent year for which figures are available. But the federal agency's move comes even as its own funding for fighting lead poisoning has been slashed, leaving state and local governments with fewer resources to tackle what has now been recognized as a much bigger problem.

SOUTHERN MARYLAND NEWSPAPERS

From Early Bird College survey finds residents cool on higher taxes Most Southern Marylanders support fewer taxes and fewer restrictions on development, which comes as no surprise to their legislators. Since 2008, College of Southern Maryland students have polled residents living throughout the region on certain timely topics, through a survey known as the Pulse of Southern Maryland. The latest survey, called "Taxes," asked for individuals' opinions regarding issues like the gas tax, land use and Chesapeake Bay cleanup, which were addressed this spring during the 2012 legislative session in Annapolis.

VIRGINIA

NORFOLK VIRGINIAN-PILOT

From Early Bird Swimming advisories issued in Va. Beach, Dare Co. VIRGINIA BEACH -- Swimming advisories have been issued for the Chesapeake Bay and sites in Dare County. Today, an advisory was issued for the Chesapeake Bay between Wake Forest Street and Rockbridge Road when bacteria levels in the water exceeded state water quality standards, according to a news release from the city of Virginia Beach. A swimming advisory was also posted for a site along the sound at Jockey's Ridge in North Carolina today. On May 9, the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources also issued an advisory at the end of Colington Drive in Kill Devil Hills. At both sites, the bacteria levels in the water exceeded the state and Environmental Protection Agency's recreational water quality standards, a news release said. The sites continue to be tested and the advisories will be taken down when the bacteria levels decrease below the standards. Signs are posted at all three sites. Officials test sites throughout the coastal region weekly, from April to October in North Carolina and from May to September in Virginia Beach.

WAVY-TV HAMPTON ROADS

From Early Bird Swimming advisories issued for bacteria HAMPTON ROADS, Va. (WAVY) - Swimming advisories have been issued for parts of Hampton Roads and North Carolina. It might be hot, but avoid swimming in parts of Chicks Beach. The Virginia Beach Department of Health issued a swimming advisory for the Chesapeake Bay between Wake Forest Street and Rockbridge Road. Tests showed high levels of bacteria in the water. Signs will be posted along the beach in those areas and officials will continue to test the water until it meets state standards. In Dare County, an advisory has been issued at a sound-side site where state officials also found high bacteria levels. The advisory affects Jockey's Ridge sound-side access in Nags Head. The advisory is not a beach closing and does not affect the entire Nags Head area. Swimming advisories affect water within 200 feet of posted signs.

FALLS CHURCH NEWS PRESS

From Early Bird Commentary: Moran's News Commentary: Fighting to Protect the Potomac River This week, American Rivers, a national organization dedicated to the protection and restoration of the nation's rivers and streams, released a report listing the country's ten most endangered waterways. Topping the list is the Potomac. It's a wakeup call that we must do more to protect our nation's waterways, particularly Potomac River. The Potomac River, known as the "nation's river," is a vital resource for the tourism and fishing industries, outdoor enthusiasts and the five million people who depend on it for drinking water. Running 380 miles through Virginia, Washington DC, Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania, the Potomac has suffered from decades of urban, suburban and agricultural runoff. The Potomac River feeds into the Chesapeake Bay, joining the health of the two waterways. Actions undertaken through the Clean Water Act of 1972 have proven successful. In particular, upgrades to water treatment facilities have dramatically reduced the incidence of water-borne diseases and enabled some aquatic species to return to healthy levels. To build on these improvements, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must expand these fixes all along the watershed. This progress, however, threatens to be overwhelmed by population growth and consolidations and growth in the agricultural sector.

DANVILLE REGISTER AND BEE

From Early Bird New uranium group holds first meeting in Pittsylvania County CHATHAM -- A newly formed group focusing on concerns about the economic impact of uranium mining and milling in the Dan River Region held its first meeting Wednesday night. About 35 people attended the invitation-only, informational gathering of the Alliance for Progress in Southern Virginia at the Olde Dominion Agricultural Complex in Chatham. The alliance, which has a core group of about eight to 10 members, is a coalition of business leaders and owners, small businesses, farmers, community leaders and residents from Southside Virginia. Their three main economic concerns

surrounding uranium mining and milling are impacts on regional economic development, the possibility of reduced property values and its effect on agriculture. "There are a number of concerns related to the mining and milling of uranium that need to be addressed before the ban is lifted," said Jay S. Poole, spokesman for the group, during an interview before the meeting. The organization includes Ben Davenport, Karl Stauber, Charles Majors and other community leaders. Virginia Uranium Inc. seeks to mine and mill a 119-million-pound uranium ore deposit at Coles Hill, about six miles northeast of Chatham. Virginia has had a moratorium on uranium mining and milling since 1982. Poole said the group wants to elevate the visibility of questions and concerns expressed by members of the alliance. "The alliance believes there should be no uranium mining unless it's proven to be safe," Poole said.

LYNCHBURG NEWS AND ADVANCE

From Early Bird Lynchburg hoping recycling program doesn't suffer, despite cuts Lynchburg officials said they have reached out to several area recycling firms in hopes of keeping the city program going at full strength. Four of the city's nine recycling drop-offs are set to close in July due to budget cuts. Officials are searching for a way to keep the sites open while clipping costs. "We've had some discussions about different types of public-private partnerships," said Dave Owen, director of public works. The city approached three local companies and asked for ideas, Owen said. They hope to get proposals in time for a June presentation to City Council. "This is just preliminary exploration," said City Manager Kimball Payne, adding at least one company was very interested. Lynchburg's recycling drop-offs are free sites where residents can leave specified types of cans, plastic goods, cardboard and paper to be recycled. The city sells the recyclables it collects, but loses money on the program overall. Closing four drop-off sites is expected to save about \$85,000 a year.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Va.)

From Early Bird James River added to historic Smith trail RICHMOND -- A 220-mile section of the James River is now a part of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. The addition of the James from the Chesapeake Bay to the fall line in Richmond was announced Wednesday by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar. The 841-mile river trail charts the exploration of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries by Smith after Europeans arrived at Jamestown more than four centuries ago. The James River addition crosses nine counties. Like previously designated portions of the river trail, the James addition includes historical points of interest and public access to recreational and tourism sites. Other rivers in the system include the Susquehanna, the Chester and the Upper Nanticoke.

MISCELLANEOUS

NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO

From Early Bird Fracking's Methane Trail: A Detective Story There are a lot of cheerleaders for the nation's natural gas boom — in part because they believe it's a lot cleaner than dirty coal. It's pretty well-known that power plants that burn coal pump out far more greenhouse gases than power plants that run on natural gas. But there's a hitch: We don't really know how much air pollution is created when companies drill for natural gas. Well heads, storage tanks and pipelines all leak methane in sprawling gas fields. "We need to know a lot about methane itself, which is natural gas, if we're worried about climate change," says energy consultant Sue Tierney, "so that we don't automatically think that gas is so much cleaner than coal." Methane is a very potent greenhouse gas. It's very effective at trapping heat in the atmosphere. "Fifty years from now, are we really going to be wondering if we really screwed up because we went on this big gas boom? You really wouldn't want to be messing that up," Tierney says. She says that's why it's so important to study air pollution from natural gas production now. Tierney was on an Energy Department advisory panel that recommended that gas companies start measuring and reporting their air emissions.

TRUTHOUT

From Early Bird When Polluted Water Is Safe to Drink: Inside the Dimock Fracking Fight The US

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has spent the past four months testing water wells used by families in the rural community of Dimock, Pennsylvania, where residents and environmental activists have accused a gas drilling company of contaminating water supplies while drilling for natural gas in the area. As the debate over the gas drilling technique known as fracking rages across the country, the Dimock debacle has made national headlines; pitted neighbor against neighbor; and attracted the attention of activists, industry groups and even a movie star. The EPA study is nearly complete and both sides of the fracking debate are eager for answers, but for many onlookers, the truth about the drinking water in Dimock has remained as murky as the water that its outspoken residents pull from their wells. The EPA found pollutants in Dimock well water such as methane, arsenic, manganese, lead and barium. In some cases, the level of contamination exceeded federal health standards, but the agency has consistently stated the contamination levels do not pose a health concern or require immediate action from regulators. This apparent inconsistency has led to some serious media spin. As the EPA released test results throughout the study, mainstream media outlets and industry groups were quick to declare that the water in Dimock was safe to drink and EPA did not link any contaminants to fracking. Meanwhile, environmentalists and the anti-fracking group Water Defense questioned the agency's accuracy and pointed to the presence of methane and other pollutants in several wells as evidence that the water is not safe to use... Ronald Bishop, a fracking critic and biochemistry professor in the New York State University system, quickly disagreed with the EPA's latest analysis of the Dimock data. In a statement posted on the [Water Defense web site](#), Bishop said one-third of the wells were contaminated with methane within ranges that could be ignited or detonated, bringing to mind the now infamous images of fracking victims lighting their tap water on fire. "These levels are of special concern where any hot water is used, since heating methane-contaminated water drives most of the methane into the air, which when inhaled can induce symptoms of oxygen deprivation in people or animals with cardiac, respiratory or central nervous system impairments," Bishop said.

BNA DAILY ENVIRONMENT REPORT

From Early Bird EPA Administrator Defends Funding Request for More Study on Fracking EPA Administrator

Jackson defends the agency's funding request for additional research on the impact of hydraulic fracturing on the environment. Speaking before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, Jackson says the Obama administration wants to assure the public that the safety of hydraulic fracturing to extract natural gas and oil is based on "the very best science." The president's fiscal year 2013 budget includes \$14 million for EPA to fund research on hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, with \$8 million of that to fund a joint effort by EPA, the Energy Department, and the U.S. Geological Survey.

From Early Bird White House Urged Not to Require Disclosure of Chemical Identities Requiring chemical manufacturers to reveal the identities of new chemicals not yet made or sold in the United States would harm innovation, jobs, and the economy, Republican and Democratic House legislators tell the White House Office of Management and Budget. "We write to strongly urge that these specific chemical identities, which EPA can already use to evaluate the safety of these chemicals and products, not be disclosed publicly due to the substantial negative impact," the lawmakers say in a letter to Cass Sunstein, administrator of OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs.

REUTERS

From Early Bird A first look at the coverage implications of hydraulic fracturing The controversial natural gas extraction process known as high-volume hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking" for short, has come to dominate the nation's attention as we seek to, finally, extricate ourselves from dependency on Middle East oil. On one hand, fracking offers the potential to recover a tremendous amount of natural gas from various domestic shale formations, and in doing so, to generate new wealth and to create jobs in historically depressed areas of the country. On the

other hand, fracking opponents claim there are significant environmental concerns associated with the practice, which they fear may lead to ground and surface water pollution, seismic events, and other unintended consequences. With the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation expected to issue regulations on fracking by year's end, anticipation on both sides of the issue grows daily regarding the potential risks, opportunities, and liability implications. Businesses, utilities, insurers, municipalities, environmental groups, and citizens and landowners all have plenty at stake, and once fracking makes its way into New York, the unique nature of this controversial practice will inevitably test traditional theories of liability and insurance coverage — as well as create correspondingly unique, first-impression issues in the courts.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

From Early Bird Vt. becomes 1st state to ban hydraulic fracturing Gov. Peter Shumlin on Wednesday signed into law the nation's first ban on a hotly debated natural gas drilling technique that involves blasting chemical-laced water deep into the ground. The Democrat, surrounded at a Statehouse ceremony by environmentalists and Twinfield Union School students who pushed for the ban, said the law may help Vermont set an example for other states. The ban may be largely symbolic, though, because there is believed to be little to no natural gas or oil beneath the surface in Vermont. The gas drilling technique, called hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, involves the high-pressure injection of water and chemicals into the ground to split rock apart and release natural gas or oil. It's being used extensively in the rapidly expanding natural gas industry in several states. Critics have blamed the practice for contaminating drinking water wells of some residents living near the drilling operations, but natural gas industry officials dispute those claims. Shumlin said the increased amounts of natural gas obtainable through hydraulic fracturing were not worth the risk to drinking water supplies. In the coming generation or two, "drinking water will be more valuable than oil or natural gas," Shumlin said. "Human beings survived for thousands and thousands of years without oil and without natural gas," he said. "We have never known humanity or life on this planet to survive without clean water." Shumlin then appeared to contradict himself, saying other states should emulate Vermont's ban on hydraulic fracturing but also should be the "guinea pigs" for testing the process.

From Early Bird A 13 percent drop in oil prices this month is helping drivers and businesses NEW YORK — What only weeks ago was seen as a serious threat to the economic recovery could now turn into a stimulus everyone can love. Oil and gasoline prices are sinking, giving relief to businesses and consumers who a few weeks ago seemed about to face the highest fuel prices ever. President Barack Obama's re-election prospects could also benefit, especially if prices keep falling as some analysts expect. A majority of Americans disapproved of Obama's handling of gas prices in an AP-GfK poll early this month. But that was before the full effect of the recent drop had reached drivers. The average U.S. retail gasoline price has dropped 21 cents a gallon to \$3.73 since hitting a 2012 peak of \$3.94 on April 6.

ROLLINGSTONE

From Early Bird Blog: Mark Ruffalo on the Fracking Fight Mark Ruffalo, aka the Incredible Hulk, is the natural gas industry's worst nightmare: a serious, committed activist who is determined to use his star power as a superhero in the hottest movie of the moment to draw attention to the environmental and public health risks of fracking. Last night, Ruffalo hosted a rally and concert in Albany, New York, featuring performances by Natalie Merchant, Joan Osborne, and others, as well as testimonials of people who live (and suffer) in states where fracking has gone wild. Although the event was sold-out, with about 1,000 people in attendance, the target audience was clearly one man: New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who is currently considering lifting a moratorium on fracking in the state. "We are not the sum of dollars and cents, but people of flesh and blood who have entrusted the folks here in Albany to safeguard our health and our common good," Ruffalo said in fiery remarks that opened the concert. "We are here to celebrate our strengths and bear witness to the devastating public health and safety issues that surround hydrofracking. We are here to lift up the scientists and their better judgments against the paid-for political science of the oil and gas industry. We are here, firmly but respectfully, to ask our governor to be our hero." Ruffalo and I talked for a few minutes backstage during intermission. As usual, he looked a little disheveled — unshaven, uncombed, dressed in jeans. It's easy to make fun of celebrity activists, but Ruffalo, whose activism has

included co-founding an anti-fracking advocacy organization, Water Defense, is unpretentious, well-informed, and – befitting of a guy who plays a superhero – fearless in his criticism of an industry that he believes is plundering America and putting our environment and our health in jeopardy.

PHYS.ORG

Researchers create low-cost, effective method for measuring exposure to toxic metals A device built by Chuck Henry, a chemistry professor, working in tandem with John Volckens, associate professor in Environmental and Radiological Health Sciences, takes only minutes to determine whether someone has been exposed to high levels of airborne metals. A new paper on the research appears this month in the journal *Analytical Chemistry*. “We hope to be able to understand what tasks and/or locations in a particular job have the highest exposure,” Henry said. “Millions of U.S. workers are exposed to heavy metals, and if we can identify these exposures in a cost-effective manner, then we should be able to help mitigate the problem and protect the health of our industrial workforce.” How it works:

UPI

EPA wants more money to probe fracking WASHINGTON, May 17 (UPI) -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said it was requesting a funding increase to investigate hydraulic fracturing technologies. The EPA said it made a budget request of \$8.3 billion for fiscal year 2013. About 10 percent of the budget would target science and technology funding. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson told a U.S. Senate appropriations committee that part of the \$807 million in funding for research includes hydraulic fracturing. Hydraulic fracturing uses water mixed with abrasives and chemicals to coax oil and natural gas out of rock formations deep underground. The method is controversial because of the perceived threats to the environment.

POLITICO

When it comes to natural gas, Obama cant win President Barack Obama talked up natural gas in his State of the Union address, his top aides have held dozens of meetings with natural gas industry leaders and his administration has given the industry what it wanted on two big regulatory issues. What he’s gotten in return: a giant headache. Industry backers have hammered away at virtually all of the White House’s rule-making efforts while pouring millions of dollars into campaigns fighting Obama’s reelection. At the same time, environmentalists and even some Republicans have complained that natural gas is too cozy with the White House. The gas industry’s had plenty of access. This year, the White House Office of Management and Budget held at least a dozen meetings on fracking with senior officials from companies like ExxonMobil, Anadarko and BP, as well as Republican congressional staffers, tribal leaders and industry lobby shops. But the White House seems unable to decide how close it wants to be to the industry.

WCHS RADIO 58

EPA's Jackson Signs New Air Standards

Federal EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson told members of a U.S. Senate subcommittee Wednesday she has now signed a policy setting new Mercury and Air Toxics Standards for coal and oil-fired power plants. Jackson was testifying about the agency's budget proposal to members of a subcommittee of the Senate's Appropriations Committee. In her opening statement, she said she signed the standards Wednesday morning just before the meeting. They were first announced last December. The rules will require power companies to install equipment to control emissions to cut back on mercury, arsenic, acid gas, nickel, selenium, and cyanide. Jackson says the standards were first discussed in connection with the 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act but only about 50 percent of companies that operate coal-fired power plants have made changes. The new standards will force everyone to do so. "Nearly half of the country's coal-fired plants continue to do nothing to limit the amounts of these poisons that they spew into the air. EPA's new action will ensure that companies all across the country follow the same rules," Jackson told the committee. Jackson also said the standards will improve the health of many residents. "These new standards will each year prevent up to 17-thousand premature deaths in America not to mention 120-thousand cases of aggravated asthma," Jackson said. "The health benefits will swamp the complaints

caused by about 10 to 1."

NRDC - SWITCHBOARD

Concerns about the health risks of fracking continue to grow. According to a recent article in Inside EPA (subscription only), the National Research Council (NRC) is preparing to undertake a preliminary review of the potential human and environmental risks of shale gas development, in particular hydraulic fracturing. The article quotes an NRC senior scholar as saying that a major comprehensive study is needed across all NRC divisions because there are many issues that have not gotten careful scientific review. The Institute of Medicine, another branch of the National Academies, is also working to identify human health concerns associated with shale gas development and examine potential frameworks, such as health impact assessments, for filling some of the data gaps. A new series on National Public Radio is examining "The Fracking Boom: Missing Answers" -- about why we don't know more about the health impacts of living near oil and gas production operations. The stories in this important series include "Town's Effort To Link Fracking And Illness Falls Short": many people in Dish, Texas believe their serious health symptoms are linked to nearby natural gas operations, and a scientist's comments: "the development is way out ahead of public health evaluations of any kind to date." In "Medical Records Could Yield Answers On Fracking," more people report health symptoms in Pennsylvania near natural gas extraction facilities, but so far there is not the money needed for a comprehensive study.

HUFFINGTON POST

Coal Use Drops to Record Lows While Clean Energy Soars

It's amazing how much can change in a year. At this time in 2011, we were testing our hair for mercury as a way to encourage the EPA to adopt strong mercury pollution protections -- which the agency did. I was also celebrating generating my first clean kilowatt of energy from brand new solar panels on my home. A mere one year later, some jaw-dropping numbers have just come in: In the first quarter of 2012, coal made up just 36 percent of U.S. electricity generation -- down from nearly 45 percent from the same period in 2011. That's a 9 percent drop in U.S. coal use *in just one year*. The report, released this week by the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), had even more bad news for big polluters. Electricity generation from coal may drop another 14 percent this year. The EIA also believes coal production will decline 10 percent in 2012. Meanwhile, wind energy is thriving. In the first quarter of 2012, the U.S. installed 1,695 megawatts of wind, one of the industry's best quarters ever, up 53 percent from the same time last year, according to the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA). Wind projects are creating jobs and economic opportunity across the country, with 32 new projects installed in 17 states in the first quarter alone.

Brooklynites: Don't Frack Our Beer! Does worrying about fracking make you thirst for a drink? Before you raise that pint of ale to your lips, consider the source. The brewmeister of Brooklyn Brewery says toxic fracking chemicals like methanol, benzene and ethylene glycol (found in anti-freeze) could contaminate his beer by leaking into New York's water supply. Unlike neighboring Pennsylvania, New York state has promised to ban high-volume fracking from the city's watershed. But environmentalists say the draft fracking regulations are weak and leave the largest unfiltered water supply in the US—not to mention the beer that is made from it—vulnerable.

AMERICAN RIVERS

The Potomac River Diet

American Rivers' designation of the Potomac River as *America's Most Endangered River*® of 2012 is a clarion call for additional government leadership, action, and investment – not less. From the federal decisions in Congress, to code and ordinance changes at the county level, we have an opportunity to weigh-in on matters critical to the quality of the water that flows in our rivers. At the federal level, rule makers are now considering changes that will rollback protections afforded by the Clean Water Act, which has improved water quality and revitalized communities along our waterways. Now celebrating its 40th year of protecting the nation's rivers, this landmark legislation—and the Environmental Protection Agency, which enforces it—is under siege from industry special interests and budget cuts.

AOL ENERGY

EPA's Jackson Says Fracking Water Study Won't Stop Drilling Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson on Wednesday sought to tamp down concerns raised by Republican senators that the Obama administration will try to curtail shale gas and oil development through its studies of hydraulic fracturing. At a hearing before a Senate Appropriations Committee panel on EPA's \$8.3 billion 2013 budget request, Jackson said a request for \$8 million for additional hydraulic fracturing research was not intended to put new roadblocks in the way of domestic drilling. The additional money would pay for EPA's portion of new fracking studies to be done with other federal agencies. The agency has also asked for more than \$4 million to continue work on the congressionally-mandated study of potential impacts to drinking water supplies. "I guess I'm a little concerned about the scope of the study that we're seeing come out," said Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, the top Republican on the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Subcommittee. Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., asked, "Does that study stop us from moving forward with hydraulic fracturing?" Jackson said the drinking water study would inform EPA of any unexpected threats to public health, but not to stop fracturing, which has led to a boom in gas development in Pennsylvania and West Virginia and oil drilling in the Plains states.

NEW YORK TIMES

Sterilizing That Blasted Ballast In the dank bowels of the ship, a million microbes squirm and writhe. Their watery cradle — the ballast — plays a central role in balancing the weight of giant cargo ships that regularly shuttle back and forth between the world's oceans. Invisibly ferried from port to port, the hitchhiking larvae, phytoplankton and bacteria pose a costly threat. If flushed into the wrong environment, these aliens could very well take over ecosystems. "Invasions happen all the time," said Mario Tamburri, a marine ecologist at the University of Maryland's Center for Environmental Science and the director of the Maritime Environmental Resource Center, or MERC, in the Chesapeake Bay. "Some are benign, but some cause enormous damage." Dr. Tamburri and his colleagues spend much of their time aboard one of the newest research vessels in American waters, trying to find solutions to the ballast problem. ... Ballast-sterilizing techniques may need to be customized for different types of ships plying different routes. In the Chesapeake Bay, MERC researchers test the methods on water gradients of varying salinity, from fresh to brackish to very salty. Initial trials suggest that a broad suite of solutions may ultimately be adopted. ...